DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 414 274 SP 037 678

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TITLE	Preparing Teachers To Teach in 2007.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	7p.; Paper presented at a Conference of the Australian College of Education Conference (Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, April 30-May 1, 1997).
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Secondary Education; Females; Foreign Countries; *Futures (of Society); Higher Education; Politics of Education; *Preservice Teacher Education; Sex Bias; Sex Discrimination; *Social Change; *Social Influences; Social Responsibility; Teacher Educators; *Teacher Responsibility; Womens Education
IDENTIFIERS	Australia

ABSTRACT

The shape and purpose of teacher education is affected by what happens in schools, and what happens in schools is largely the result of the shape and purpose of four message systems: curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and discipline. Seven social issues are important in bringing about significant changes to the message systems of schools. They include: (1) the disorder of information; (2) symbolic analysis of information and the ordering of disorder (3) economic convergence and stratification; (4) the crisis of political ecology; (5) social diastrophism; (6) environmental degradation; and (7) the inequalities suffered by women. Teacher education for 2007 will need to develop in prospective teachers a holistic and global understanding of education; an understanding of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment as socially constructed and continually contested; and a commitment to engagement with not only classroom practice but also with the various agents and interests that shape the context of practice. (SM)

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ED 414 274

Preparing Teachers to Teach in 2007

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R. Bates

Australian College of Education Conference on the Status of Teaching
Carlton Crest Hotel, Melbourne
April 30-May 1 1997

SP 037 378

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There are currently a number of attempts to codify and prescribe the features that should characterise initial teacher education. The NPQTL 'National Competency Framework for Beginning Teachers', the various documents from the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration, the statement from the Victorian Standards Council for the Teaching Profession. Each of these documents presents a comprehensive, if not daunting, list of qualities required of beginning teachers. Not the least daunting a comprehensive account is that provided by the Australian Council of Deans of Education, the Australian Teacher Education Association and the now defunct Australian Teaching Council. There is one statement in this document that I particularly like as it causes us to lift our eyes from the long list of industrial particulars and address the issue of what kind of person we wish teachers to be and what kind of program would support that end.

> Programs should foster critical and reflective capacities, aesthetic sensibilities, an understanding of knowledge itself as a social construct, an appreciation of the diverse modes of human experience and expression, creativity and a deep valuing of ideas and lifelong learning. All teacher education students need to develop the capacity to understand and respond positively to the reality and challenge of a changing society (p7)

I do not know who wrote this statement but I congratulate her. It seems to me to encapsulate the humane ideal which has inspired not only teachers but those members of the wider society who believe that human action can bring about the betterment of society and the improvement of life for citizens.

How, the realisation of such an ideal currently faces several impediments and it is these and their possible resolution within programs of teacher education to which I wish to turn our attention for a few brief moments.

What Schools Do.

The shape and purpose of teacher education is inevitably affected by what happens in schools. What happens in schools is largely the result of the shape and purpose of four message systems:

- Curriculum: what knowledge is to be taught
- Pedagogy: how knowledge is to be taught
- Assessment: how knowledge is realised
- Discipline: the technology of authority, surveillance and control within which the other three message systems operate.

These four message systems are essentially problematic and open to continuous debate. For instance while epistemology has been appealed to as a basis for determining the fundamental distinctions between the various forms of knowledge (see Hirst, Phoenix et al) the boundaries between forms of school knowledge (curriculum) continually shift and each practical realisation of these boundaries is an arbitrary and historical achievement (see Goodson). Curriculum is determined not so much by an epistemological distribution of knowledge but in social convention and administrative, if not political, convenience. The

current Key Learning Areas are a particularly shining example of this arbitrariness as is the National Curriculum in England.

Teachers, and teacher education students need to understand that curriculum is a social construction rather than a strictly epistemological construction. they also need to have an appreciation of the social, cultural, political and administrative battles that shape and reshape the curriculum of schools. More than this, they need to know how their voices can be heard in these various battles.

Secondly, pedagogy, how knowledge is to be taught, is also contested. At the most basic level, theories of intelligence which underlie various models of learning are themselves contested. The idea of general intelligence, for instance, would seem to support a universal pedagogy, convergent and standardised while theories of multiple intelligences support a significantly more diverse pedagogy. The battle over the preferred way(s) to teach literacy is another exemplar. Teacher education students need to understand this and be able to develop a defensible and comprehensive professional practice.

Thirdly, assessment - how the realisation of knowledge by the learner is to be determined- is also bedevilled by notions of standards and standardisation on the one hand, and creativity and divergence on the other. Arguments over the comparison and standardisation of scores of greatly differing subjects in VCE are a good example of these complexities.

The fourth message system - that of the disciplinary structures through which the other message systems are ordered and the work of teachers and pupils managed- is constantly subject to revision, witness the dramatic attempts to alter such structures in England and Wales or, indeed, in Victoria over the most recent past.

If these message systems are the substance of the activities of schools then teacher education students need to not only know what is the form of the message systems current in schools at any one time but also sufficient of the battles between ideas and interests which themselves help shape and re-shape contemporary educational ideas and practice.

This morning I want to mention some half dozen major issue which will bring about significant changes to the message systems of schools, indeed to the very notion of schools and therefore teaching, over the next decade. Teacher education programs ignore them at our peril.

Making Chaos out of Order: Social Change and Teacher Education

The disorder of information.

Perhaps the most dramatic and immediately obvious social changes of the last decade is the information explosion which, coupled with the convergence of information and communications technologies is producing and information madness whereby a surfeit of information produces an ocean in which teachers and learners can easily drown. I intend to say little about this because the effects are so obvious to us all.

Symbolic analysis and the ordering of disorder.

One of the rather obvious requirements arising from the disorder of information with which we are faced is the need for a cadre of intellectuals whose employment is concerned with the symbolic analysis of information and its ordering in terms of social, cultural, economic and productive objectives. Universities are, of course, major centres of such symbolic analysis as well as the context within which initial teacher education occurs. It is

therefore a major responsibility of teacher educators to undertake their own assessment of the various forms of symbolic analysis with which they are surrounded and to articulate these into the practices (the message systems) of teacher education.

But universities are no longer the sole centres of symbolic analysis - indeed, they never were. Bureaucracies of all kinds, public, industrial, commercial, are also major centres of symbolic analysis as indeed are media and schools themselves.

Economic convergence and stratification.

Partly as a result of the industrial and economic interests which shape particular forms of symbolic analysis on an increasingly global scale (money markets and foreign exchange markets for instance) various forms of economic convergence are being developed. The globalisation of production in key sectors - machine tools and agriculture for instance- bring about both economic convergence (in that production is organised into increasingly larger units on a global scale) and stratification both within and between nation states (that is, a significant divergence between haves and have nots). This convergence of production and divergence of wealth produces a crisis of political ecology of some significance.

The crisis of political ecology.

The increasingly global organisation of markets and currency flows has produced, as Paul Kennedy (1995) observes, a series of political crises at international, national and local levels. Firstly, international political organisation has only slowly developed in response to the globalisation of the organisation of production and distribution. As yet, such global political organisation is embryonic and significantly under-resourced in terms of both finance and political authority which remains largely with nation states.

Nation states, however, are no longer themselves able to exercise sovereign economic or cultural authority as the global economy operates according to different interests and as more local geographic and ethnic communities assert their independence from the nation state - France, Italy, Spain being relatively mild examples while the break up of the former Yugoslavia and Russian federations are more dramatic instances. Here the fifth major change that will shape the forthcoming decade comes into play. I call it Social Diastrophism.

Social Diastrophism.

Diastrophism, as geographers will know, is the process of movement and deformation in the earth's crust that gives rise to large scale features such as continents, ocean basins and mountains. Social diastorphism therefore, refers to large scale social movements and deformations and refers primarily to the impact of the population explosion and the wars and migrations that flow from it.

Our current population is somewhere around 5 billion. Roughly a further billion will be added to this population by 2007. Most of these billion mouths will appear in the third world- the world that has the least capacity to provide for them. While Africa is likely to bear the brunt of the resulting difficulties, across Eurasia the disparities between countries and regions in population growth, economic growth and social, political and military development will be immense and may well lead to significant movement and deformation of social structures on a large scale. Australia is already an inheritor of some such displacement through migration and the consequent challenges of dealing with difference and diversity.

The global effect of such population growth and displacement is, however, significant also in another way as it provides one component in a deadly cocktail. The other ingredient is environmental degradation.

Environmental degradation.

One of the significant results of explosive population growth is the environmental impact on forest cover, non-renewable resources and agriculture in particular. This impact is further exaggerated by the fact that four fifths of global resources are consumed by the population of the first world. Moreover the translation of subsistence agriculture in the third world to cash crop monocultures for export to the first world further exacerbates the difficulties of third world governments and populations. The environmental consequences of continuing activity of this kind are patent and will become more so over the next decade.

The inequalities of women.

Any approach to the mitigation of these problems must address a further issue - that of the redress of the inequalities suffered by women on a world wide scale, but particularly in those countries which severely restrict the education and social participation of women. The education of girls is perhaps the most significant global issue which is likely to impact on fertility levels, agricultural production and environmental decline as well as being a matter of fundamental social justice.

The Order and Disorder of Teacher Education.

Currently much of the debate concerning teacher education in English speaking countries is couched in terms of technology and content. The forms of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment to be developed through teacher education are directed towards establishing order in these message systems. However, the attempt to establish such order separate from the disorder of the surrounding global, national and local communities places too great a burden on schools and is unlikely to succeed. Neither schooling nor teacher education can be separated from their surrounding societies.

Currently, however, the disciplinary systems of schooling and, by association, of teacher education, are focussed on forms of control that recoil from current sources of social disorder. Current moves to impose a modernist education in a post-modern world- such as a prescriptive National Curriculum or back to basics in literacy and numeracy, while not in themselves undesirable, miss the point entirely if they prevent teachers and teacher educators from addressing significant sources of social disorder.

Teachers Voice.

Teachers are, whether they like it or not, embedded intellectuals - that is, they are not simply practitioners or technicians as many would like them to be. They are one of the foremost groups of symbolic analysts in society for they, in their day to day practice interpret curricular, pedagogical and assessment systems through their symbolic interaction with their pupils. Whatever is 'decided' elsewhere teachers are always in a situation of choice and interpretation for there are always contradictions to be resolved in the practice of teaching.

Teacher education for 2007 will therefore need to develop in prospective teachers

- an underlying understanding of education and schooling within the context of global social as well as epistemological change
- an understanding of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment as socially constructed and contested on a continuous basis
- a commitment to engagement not only with classroom practice but also with the various agents and interests that shape the context of that practice, not least in terms of the pursuit of equity, justice and opportunity

In short, and returning to the affirmation made in the Draft Guidelines on Initial Teacher Education, the social responsibility of the teacher as a global citizen must be foundational in the teacher education of 2007. Or, to quote the eminent historian Paul Kennedy in his assessment of what is needed in Preparing for the Twenty-first Century (1993)

> ...education in the larger sense means more than technically 're-tooling' the workforce, or the emergence of professional classes, or even the encouragement of a manufacturing culture in the schools and colleges in order to preserve a production base. It also implies a deep understanding of why our world is changing, of how other people and cultures feel about these changes, of what we all have in common - as well as of what divides cultures, classes and nations. Moreover while this process of inquiry ought, if possible, to be tolerant and empathetic, it cannot be value- free. In the end, it is not enough merely to understand what we are doing to our planet....Because we are all members of a world citizenry, we also need to equip ourselves with a system of ethics, a sense of fairness, and a sense of proportion as we consider the various ways in which, collectively or individually, we can better prepare for the twenty-first century.
>
> (Kennedy, 1993:34-341)

Teacher educators in 2007 must take cognisance of our responsibility to prepare teachers with the skills, nerve and sense of fairness that will enable them and their students in turn to take part in the remaking of an increasingly dangerous and disordered world but one which is still beautiful and full of possibilities.

Reference

Kennedy, Paul (1993) *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century*. London. Harper-collins.